

“Social Distancing” with active children

How to keep your active children occupied during COVID19

Your child is generally bouncing off the walls on a busy day, and now you’re stuck at home. How on earth are you going to keep them busy and stay sane over the next few weeks?? Here are some ideas and resources for home or the backyard.

“Heavy Work”

Active kids need to use their bodies. *Really* use their bodies. Here are some ideas to get them lifting, pushing, pulling, and carrying at home:

- Pull siblings around on a sheet or blanket
- Pull siblings or books in a wagon
- Build a fort out of cushions, mattresses, and/or cardboard boxes
- Have “shot put” competitions with cushions and pillows
- Shovel sand or dirt
- Help with chores around the house and outside
- Help rearrange furniture
- Make laundry basket ‘busses’ for stuffed animals
- Play “row row row your boat” sitting on the floor and pushing and pulling each other
- Crawl through a resistance tunnel or tight fabric ‘tube’
- Play “vacation” and load up suitcases and pull them around the house
- Tug of war
- Roll playdough
- Stir thick batter

Exercises

Other ways to get kids to use their bodies and tire them out are to do different exercises and body based competitions such as:

- Yoga poses
- Push up or sit up competitions
- Catch with a medicine ball
- Medicine ball squats or other exercises
- Rowing with a resistance band
- Crab walk, bear walk or army crawl races
- Balance competitions
- Run lines, running races
- Timed football shuffles

“Control Your Body” Activities

Activities which make kids focus and control their bodies while playing helps develop self regulation skills and also helps “turn on” their thinking brain when they start to get out of control. Some ideas are:

- Freeze dance
- Musical chairs
- Obstacle courses
- Sensory Pathways
- Quick response games such as slap jack
- Operation
- Hide and seek
- Scavenger hunts
- Hop scotch
- What time is it Mr. Wolf?
- ‘balance beams’ with tape
- Red light green light
- Bop it
- Simon says
- Choreographed dancing
- Drumming to a pattern
- Jenga
- Pick up sticks
- Keep the balloon up
- Target practice games
- Mazes (make with tape)



Repetitive, patterned activities

Activities that are repetitive and patterned are regulating (think rocking a baby). Some ideas are:

- Passing a ball back and forth
- Kicking a soccer ball against a fence or wall
- Bouncing a basketball
- Swinging
- “the ants go marching”
- Eating crunchy or chewy foods or chewing gum
- Jumping rope
- Hula hoop
- Dancing to rhythmic music
- Drumming



Brain Games

Believe it or not, active kids sometimes need ‘reminders’ to use their thinking brain when they’re just reacting and moving. Sometimes getting them to think and focus can be calming as well. Try different puzzles and games such as:

- Strategy board games
- Mazes
- Word searches
- Puzzles
- Matching activities

Check out these websites for more great at home activity ideas:

<https://whatmomslove.com/kids/active-indoor-games-activities-for-kids-to-burn-energy/>

<https://www.thebestideasforkids.com/indoor-activities-for-kids/>

<https://www.whatdowedoallday.com/indoor-activities-for-kids/>

<https://www.funwithmama.com/indoor-activities-for-kids-during-school-closures/?fbclid=IwAR39mH0FQhJnR61YN6BFdaz-kPiSGPZYDUsmBCrDE8dVN3MKVLIRmfDq4oY>

<https://littlebinsforlittlehands.com/kids-sensory-play-ideas/>

<https://teachingmama.org/100-sensory-play-ideas/>

Sensory Calming Strategies

If your child is anxious or dysregulated, try these strategies to calm them down:

- Deep pressure (hugs, squishing under pillows or cushions, rolling up in blankets)
- Massage or back rubs
- Slow rocking
- DIY under the table hammock (tie around the table)
- Soothing scents such as lavender, vanilla, or eucalyptus
- Blowing bubbles
- Quiet music with a steady beat
- Vibration (ie. Massager)
- Calm jars
- Moon sand or kinetic sand
- Warm bath
- Dark tent or fort
- Squeezing putty or playdough

